

H.R. 856 or S.472 would allow the American citizens in Puerto Rico to exercise their right to self-determination. They would give the American citizens in Puerto Rico an honest choice by providing congressionally approved and constitutionally sound definitions which explicitly detail the privileges and limitation of each of the status options.

In such a contest, statehood most probably would prevail. That apparently is not acceptable for the opponents of Puerto Rican self-determination. They imagine that the voters of all the territories overwhelmingly favored statehood before entering the Union and Puerto Ricans should do likewise.

But that simply is not the case. Most territories never even held referendums on statehood and, in some instances, the progress towards incorporation was advanced or stalled by whether or not the voters accepted their State constitutions. By this measure, voters in Colorado, Wisconsin, and Nebraska were decidedly ambivalent about the prospect of statehood, yet they all became States.

In Colorado's case, Congress passed an enabling act, but the citizens of the territory resoundingly rejected their first State constitution. A second State constitution was drafted and it prevailed by a narrow majority of 155 votes. But that is just the beginning of the story. President Andrew Johnson vetoed two statehood measures because Colorado's constitution differed substantially from the enabling act. Another 9 years passed before Colorado's voters managed to ratify a constitution compatible with the statehood measure.

Nebraska, for its part, could be nicknamed the reluctant State. Its voters rejected the first proposal floated for a convention to draft a State constitution and were happy to let the matter rest there. But 4 years later, Congress seized the initiative and, without a mandate from territorial residents, passed an enabling act for Nebraska.

□ 1300

The voters wanted nothing to do with it and wasted no time in defeating the second proposal for a State constitutional convention. Two years later, in a referendum which was plagued with irregularities, Nebraskans grudgingly consented to join the Union with statehood prevailing by a mere 100 votes.

Incorporating Texas into the U.S. was a cliffhanger as well. When the Republic of Texas and the U.S. each failed to ratify a treaty of annexation, Congress jettisoned the treaty process. It adopted a different strategy, drawing up a joint resolution for annexing Texas to the United States. Even that almost failed. In the Senate, the resolution squeaked by with just two votes to spare.

Last but not least, all of the States south of the Mason-Dixon line decided to secede from the Union in the 1860s,

but they were forced to remain against their will. How can anyone claim that in order for 3.8 million American citizens to be allowed a vote and to become a State or share as partners in equal terms a simple majority is not enough?

Given the historical record, we need to abandon this pretense, this exercise in revisionist history, that this Union was conceived and expanded without thoughtful reservations on the part of all participants. We need to reject unprecedented requirements which are designated to frustrate the exercise of democracy rather than enhance it. We need to extend to the American citizens of Puerto Rico the right to self-determination in the same way it was proffered to all the territories, freely. It is the only fair and just thing to do. It is the right thing to do for Congress and for our Nation.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BALLENGER). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. UPTON) at 2 o'clock.

#### PRAYER

The Reverend Kathleen Baskin, Greenland Hills United Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Most gracious one full of goodness and mercy, justice and righteousness, we know You ache for Your people to be one, as You are one with us. We pray today with a desperate longing for what is wrong in our lives and the life of our global community to be made right.

Children gaze dispassionately upon their distended bellies, and youths strike out unmercifully against family, friends, peers, and we, entangled in our own chaotic lives, struggle fiercely to soothe the world's troubled soul. Instill in us all, most especially in Your faithful servants of this body, the vision, the passion, the commitment to move beyond self-interest and to move toward peace for all Your people.

Thankful for Your confidence in us, we pray. Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TRAFICANT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### WELCOMING THE REVEREND KATHLEEN BASKIN

(Mr. SESSIONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, today I have been joined by my preacher, the Reverend Kathleen Baskin from Greenland Hills United Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas, and it is especially important for me to be here today with my preacher because, Mr. Speaker, every week when I go home, I am met by those people who are members of the church, who embrace me and my family and offer the very best to me as one of the Members of Congress, and so it is wonderful that she today is a part of that which we get to do to open the House of Representatives today.

Mr. Speaker, I give thanks not only for our heritage and our freedom, but the ability to share my preacher, a woman who speaks from the Bible, the Scripture, and who has abiding faith in our country and in our government.

So I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing Kathleen Baskin and myself to be a part of that which we do today. God bless America, and God bless Texas.

#### KEEP THE WORKERS AND GET RID OF THE TOP DOGS AND FAT CATS

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, last year the top dog at Bank One made \$9 million. The big barker at Edison Brothers made \$5 million. The kennel master at K-Mart made \$6 million.

Mr. Speaker, if that is not enough to potty train a Rottweiler, the big Doberman at AT&T made \$26 million, and do my colleagues know what he did? He got rid of 23,000 workers at AT&T.

Unbelievable. Big dogs go to the penthouse, American workers go to the dog house.

I think these companies are all screwed up. I think they should keep the workers and get rid of the fat cats at the top.

And listen to this very carefully: I say they can hire CEO's a lot cheaper in Mexico, too. Think about that.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS ATROCITIES BEING COMMITTED BY BURMESE MILITARY FORCES

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1